

INTERVIEW WITH HARRY SEARS
NOVEMBER 21, 2000 BY THOMAS GOETTEL

MR. GOETTEL: It's November 21, 2000, we are sitting here at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge maintenance shop in Sudbury. I am Tom Goettel and we are talking to Harry Sears. Harry has spent forty-two years with the Fish and Wildlife Service. About how old are you now Harry?

MR. SEARS: I am eighty-two.

MR. GOETTEL: You're eighty-two and you are still going strong. [Following remark is tongue in cheek] You're the head of the Maintenance Department here, and have been for many years. How did you get started in the Fish and Wildlife Service Harry?

MR. SEARS: Parker River wanted somebody to break up a piece of land, a salt marsh down on the tip of the island in the Ipswich section. Gordon Nightingale wanted somebody to do it so he asked me if I would be willing to work for thirty days. "Sure, I'll help you", I said. So I went down and I think I stayed there around six weeks. We broke the marsh up, and seeded it down. I finished that and moved up to the north pool, and we seeded that down. Then, I quit; the job was done so I went home for the winter. Anyway he asked me if I would come back the next spring, and I told him that if I wasn't doing anything, I might consider it. Come April, he called me up and asked me if I could come back and work for him. I told him that I would give him thirty days, or six weeks, whatever, so I worked for six weeks and at the end of that he said, "Harry, did you every think of getting on permanent"? I said, "Nope". He then said, "The first rainy day, you come in and we'll fill out papers". I told him that I wasn't interested. He said, "Yes you are". Well, a rainy day came, and he came after me and we went in and filled out papers. Within six or seven weeks, I was on permanent for Parker River.

MR. GOETTEL: Would that have been in 1958?

MR. SEARS: In 1957 I started permanent. In 1956 I worked part-time. I worked there for twelve years, at Parker River. When they opened this [Great Meadows] up they downgraded their staff to three, and that left me out. I was the low man on the totem pole. They told me that there was a job down at Great Meadows, and you can go down there. I wasn't too happy about it. I was thirty minutes from home at Parker River, and it takes an hour to get here. Sometimes it takes an hour and a half or two hours to get here. I stuck it out. Down there, I was WG-10, and I came up here as an "8". They said that this is what they had, so I took it. When Dave Beall was here, he said, "How come you are only an '8'? I'll get you a '9'". I told him, "That would be fine if you could, but I don't think you can". So, he did.

MR. GOETTEL: Good for him!

MR. SEARS: He did, he got me a "9" and that's the last one that I got. That's what started me in Fish and Wildlife.

MR. GOETTEL: What did you do before you worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service?

MR. SEARS: I was a foreman for CBS Hightrone [sic?] in Newburyport. And I was a farmer at the same time. Two years before I came up here, I had a fire. It burnt the barn, and I lost fifteen cows, three tractors, two trucks, all of the milking equipment, so I hung it up right there, as far as farming goes. I lost my shirt. Then, CBS Hightrone went out of business, or they moved out. They moved down south, and wanted me to go with them, but I wouldn't go. That's when I started up again, and I went to work full-time for Fish and Wildlife. I've been around for a long time here.

MR. GOETTEL: I know that I have known you for over twenty years here. I started working here in 1974 I think it was. That's twenty-six years. I was a summer student, and I sure learned a lot from you. I know that you are a jack-of-all-trades; you can do just about anything. You can weld and you're a good carpenter and mechanic.

MR. SEARS: I made all that stuff over in the Visitor's Center.

MR. GOETTEL: All of the displays? Really?

MR. SEARS: I made them all. I made all of the refuge signs.

MR. GOETTEL: I know that your farming experience must have come in handy too.

MR. SEARS: Oh Yeah! There are no more farm boys. You can go out and plow, harrow, and seed. You can do anything. There ain't anymore now, they can't even hook up a mower. Oh no, there's no more farm boys. They're gone.

MR. GOETTEL: It gave you a lot of good experience. You can do just about anything I guess.

MR. SEARS: That's what you've got to look for when you hire somebody.

MR. GOETTEL: I am curious. You said you were breaking up the marsh down there at Parker River. What were you seeding it with?

MR. SEARS: Millet, rye, buckwheat; anything that had a good seed to it. Then we would flood it. We would put the pump into one burrow pit, and pump into the other. This would flood it. Then the ducks would come in there and they would just swim along and scoop up that seed. We had thousands and thousands of birds; you ask Tommy [Stubbs].

MR. GOETTEL: So, you would actually plow up the salt marsh?

MR. SEARS: We would break it up with a rotor-tiller. It was a big Waukesha rotor-tiller behind an OC-6. You would put a stone boat underneath it so that when the wheels would sink you would only come down about two inches into the mud, and you would be pulling on the stone boat. That kept you from sinking into the mud.

MR. GOETTEL: What are some of the projects that you remember the most from Parker River?

MR. SEARS: We put in a water control structure. We had a Bueyrus-Airy shovel, drag line. We operated that; loaded trucks, hauled it onto the dike, capped the dike.

MR. GOETTEL: Did you build that big dike there?

MR. SEARS: No, we didn't. That was built in the WPA days. But we had to maintain it and cap it. There were numerous things. Mostly it was farming, and roadwork that I did. Then when J.C. Appel, do you remember him?

MR. GOETTEL: I never met him. I know his name, but I never met the guy.

MR. SEARS: When he came, we were doing a lot of farming. But when he came, he said, "Boys, no more dollars for ducks, dollars for people". That's when we started widening the road all of the way down, putting in new parking lots, and putting up observation towers. That's how it started. They stopped the farming there. They haven't gone back. They still

mow the fields, but that's about it.

MR. GOETTEL: Was that in about 1960 maybe?

MR. SEARS: Yeah. That was in 1963 and 64 when knocked it off.

MR. GOETTEL: You worked for some pretty good managers; Gordon Nightingale, J. C. Appel, both of them are legendary refuge managers.

MR. SEARS: Yep. There was Hal O'Connor. Do you remember Hal O'Connor?

MR. GOETTEL: Sure.

MR. SEARS: I don't know where he lives, but I saw him seven or eight years ago. He knew me.

There was also Bill French; he was Andy's father.

MR. GOETTEL: There was George Gavutis. Well, George would have been there after you left, is that right?

MR. SEARS: No, George Gavutis started from being an intern. He came there and worked under J. C. Apple. George was in charge of banding. And Apple would say to him, "I want so many birds today, I want so many [an amount] birds tomorrow". He was right on George's neck all of the time. I'm sure that he knows that. But there have been a lot of managers and assistant managers that I have gone through.

MR. GOETTEL: Here at Great Meadows you worked for the first woman refuge manager, Linda Gintoli.

MR. SEARS: Yeah, she was working out of Concord. Linda Gintoli. She got into botulism. Remember that?

MR. GOETTEL: They were in the impoundments there.

MR. SEARS: I picked up ninety-six dead birds. We took them up to the state incinerator and burned them.

MR. GOETTEL: What brought that on?

MR. SEARS: We drew the pool down, and it got hot as hell. The food on top of the water rotted. If she had pumped water in there, that would not have happened. But we had no way of putting the water back. What she wanted to do was to seed around the edge of it. But it came up awful hot and it just dried the hell out of it. They [birds] got into that goddamned rotten mud and food, and it killed them. You have to be careful when you do that. You have to have something on standby. We have a pump on standby you know?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah, you do now don't you?

MR. SEARS: Oh, we sure do!

MR. GOETTEL: Is it a Gator?

MR. SEARS: Yeah, a Gator pump that hooks on to the back of a tractor. You can pump a lot of water in a few minutes.

MR. GOETTEL: I heard a story; it was before my time, you must have been here when they were blasting out in the impoundments.

MR. SEARS: That was Lee Tibbs. Do you remember Lee Tibbs?

MR. GOETTEL: Yes. I met him up in Maine when I lived in Maine.

MR. SEARS: Well, I'll tell you about that. He wanted to put a channel out in front of the water control structure so that it would draw the water out. He said, "Well, we may be able to get a backhoe, and get in there. Or, we can hire an excavator and put it right in there and dig it out". Well, we haven't got the money, and you can't dig it. He said, "I'll go up and get the Army Corps of Engineers, the demolition boys, to come down and blow that out". I told him that it would not work. I told him that they run detonator cord on top of the ice. If you are going to blow that out, you have up put cratering charges down in a hole. I told him I would dig the holes. He said, "No, this young Sergeant knows what he's doing"! I said, "I hope so". So they come down, and run out fifty feet of detonator cord on top of the ice, and there was nothing. It didn't even crack the ice! So he said, "I'll fix that, I'll run out one thousand feet"! So he did. I told Lee that he was going to be in trouble. He said, "Don't you think that young Sergeant knows what he's doing"? I said, "No, he does not"! Come four o'clock, I said, "I'm out of here"! "O.K., see you in the morning!" Well, come 4:30, when they got ready to go they touched it off and it blew out windows and televisions down as far as Bedford and Concord! I came in the next day, and said, "Lee, how did you make out"? He thought I was being wise. I told him that I was really interested in how they had done. He said, "You know? I think I had better go back to school"! I asked him what happened. He told me, "If I could have gotten a hold of you last night, we were out here until two o'clock in the morning, nailing up windows"! I was surprised. He said, "I had to get Comeau, and they got eighty sheets of plywood, and they went around nailing up windows". I asked him if he had called Tom Horne. Tom Horne was the regional director. He said, "Yep." "Well, what did he say?" "Well, I'm going back to school!" Two days later he was out of there. I didn't hear from him for quite a while. He was down in Maine, Baxter State Park. He came by here one day and he said, "Is Harry around"? I had been off somewhere, but he still wanted to see me. I understand that he is retired now. Do you?

MR. GOETTEL: He was married to Helen Forsythe's sister. Helen was the Clerk up there. He used to come down and stop at the refuge. That is where I met him. He actually quit Baxter Park and started his own company.

MR. SEARS: Oh he did?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah, but that's the last I saw of him. I have been gone from there for ten years. I haven't seen him.

MR. SEARS: That story went around. Every refuge in the country knew about that. That was a shame. But when we were down at Parker River, J.C. Apple wanted to put some potholes in the marsh. He went over to Ellison's Island and got the Army, and they used cratering charges. I would

MR. GOETTEL: You have seen a lot of changes here. I know that Rice's property kind of came and went.

MR. SEARS: They had corrals, and outbuildings there. I tore them all down. I tore down fourteen buildings around here. The last two, Beale wanted down. He was going away for two weeks, and told me that when he got back, he wanted to see those buildings down. I asked him how he wanted me to do it. He told me just to take them apart and take them down to the dump or something. I was surprised that he expected those big buildings to come down in two weeks. He said, "Yeah, you can do it"! There came on a rainy day, it was foggy as hell. I took five gallons of diesel fuel and went upside, up and down. I started a fire, and burned two buildings down in less than six hours, right to the ground.

MR. GOETTEL: Were those the ones the two on the top of the hill?

MR. SEARS: Do you remember that old car that Steve Wunderley [sic?] had?

MR. GOETTEL: The old Gremlin?

MR. SEARS: I dug that out of the ground, and Steve said, "Oh, that was stolen"! He had buried it there. But he got rid of it. He got a Junker to come and get it. He thought that someone had stolen it, and buried it there.

I have taken down a lot of buildings around here, and everywhere, Rice's too. There were a lot of buildings at Rice's. That extended right out to the road. Then the house burned. Somebody bought it to get the timbers out of it, and try to restore it. I don't know how they ever made out. It's been interesting though.

MR. GOETTEL: You have done duck banding.

MR. SEARS: Yeah, I have done a lot of duck and goose banding with everybody. I worked with the State, banding. When Bill French was here, he said, "We've got to band some Eiders from Monomoy". He told Donny Grover and I to go down and band Eiders. We went down there for a week, and we tried everything. We tried corn, and everything. We would stay up until two or three o'clock in the morning when the tide would come in.

[Phone rings and Mr. Sears answers it. One hour later...]

MR. GOETTEL: We are back here after an hour interruption. We have Tommy Stubbs in the room now with us. Tommy was the Maintenance Foreman at Parker River for how many years?

MR. STUBBS: I was here for forty years.

MR. GOETTEL: I don't know exactly where we left off, but one of the things I was going to ask you about was law enforcement. I know that you used to do law enforcement too didn't you?

MR. SEARS: Yep.

MR. GOETTEL: Where you just checking duck hunters or doing everything?

MR. SEARS: I checked duck hunters.

MR. STUBBS: You did some "public use".

MR. GOETTEL: You probably worked with some of the agents.

MR. SEARS: I worked with the agents. I worked with Donny Grover.

MR. GOETTEL: I tried to interview Donny but he doesn't want to. He is kind of bitter

about his experience with the Fish and Wildlife Service so he doesn't want to talk too much.

MR. SEARS: Why?

MR. GOETTEL: Well, I'll tell you later.

MR. SEARS: [To Mr. Stubbs] how long was Donny in?

MR. STUBBS: He must have been in thirty years.

MR. SEARS: Thirty! He couldn't have been!

MR. STUBBS: He retired a year before I did. When did you start at Parker River?

MR. SEARS: That was in 1956.

MR. STUBBS: He started about the same time you did. That's thirty years.

MR. SEARS: I asked him once why he didn't hang in there. He was bitching at Jack. He

wasn't too old when he retired. He just bailed out.

MR. GEOTTEL: When you first started working here at Great Meadows, the office was down in Concord right? Or was it in Bedford?

MR. SEARS: The office was in Bedford.[Unintelligible] In order to get the desk in there, we had to cut the feet off, and drill a hole and peg it, after we got it in. When they moved, they left it there.

MR. GOETTEL: What that a rental property?

MR. SEARS: GSA rented it. They rented the office in Concord too, right there on Sudbury Road. GSA handled that, but I guess it came out of our budget. They handled everything.

We stayed there, until we came here.

MR. GOETTEL: I remember the office in Concord. When I started it was in Concord. The Refuge Manager's office was way in the back and every time they would flush the toilet upstairs, it would run and drip down on the desk.

MR. SEARS: You were in the other room there. Who was the other guy?

MR. GOETTEL: Daryle Lons.

MR. SEARS: Where the hell is he?

MR. GOETTEL: He is up in Alaska.

MR. SEARS: Is he?

MR. GOETTEL: There was also Doug Mackey.

MR. SEARS: Doug is down south isn't he?

MR. GOETTEL: I think he resigned. His father got cancer, and he moved back to Portland, Oregon. I don't know what he is doing now. I've lost track of him.

MR. SEARS: They had a safety meeting. He had a wooden leg, so he says "I'll take my leg off and pour some ketchup down here. You take a chainsaw and see what they say!" [All laughing] I told him that I thought it would get their attention! That went over real big. Those guys in that office were all good guys.

MR. GOETTEL: Then we bought this place here. The Elbanabscot. I remember moving down here.

MR. SEARS: Yeah. Chrissy Tougas, do you remember her? She used to be the ORP. That was the first ORP we had. She found this place. She found out that they were going bankrupt. So she came back and told Beall about it. Beall was there at the time that she was there. That was it. They wanted this place bad, and they went after it. We got it but they couldn't pay for it. They got somebody else to pay for it until they got the money for it. Do you remember when we moved here? [To Mr. Stupps] Do you remember the beds we took out? We took out a hundred beds out of that place. They had more toilets in that place.

MR. GOETTEL: [m1] How many buildings did you take down out here?

MR. SEARS: Fourteen. The last two, I burned. I got sick of that. Then I had a lot to tear down at Rice's. You remember that. I tore them down by pulling them down with a truck. Then we hauled them down to a field and we burned them. There have been a lot of changes. But Chrissy Turgis, she went to California. She's been gone a number of years, probably about fifteen years. Then she showed up here. The Sudbury police had picked her up down here. She said she worked at Great Meadows,

and they brought her down here. Firsk was here. I was at Concord, and Firsk called me. He said, "Do you know a girl by the name of Chrissy Turgis"? I said, "Yeah, she worked here". But she was just floating around, didn't do anything. She was a handsome girl. You remember that.

MR. GOETTEL: What did they pick her up for?

MR. SEARS: Because she looked like a tramp. She was bumming, and she was coming here. She had been living on the Appalachian Trail. That's where she was, and that's where she went back to after she left here. She went back out there. She went to hell. She was a hell of a nice looking girl.

MR. GOETTEL: I guess. That's too bad. She was a smart gal.

MR. SEARS: She was blonde, and nice. You knew her.

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: And Bill Lawrence knew her. But we've had a lot of people come through.

MR. STUBBS: [To Mr. Sears] what year did you come here Harry?

MR. SEARS: I was at Parker River ten years, right after that, I came up here. So it was about

1966 or 1967. Moses was here when I came here. Moses went to Parker River when I came here. Remember that?

MR. STUBBS: I thought Moses was already at Parker River.

MR. SEARS: No. He was at Great Meadows. I guess he was there a few days at the last end of it. He was down there, and I came here, and Lee Tibbs was the one who took his place. Remember him?

MR. STUBBS: Vaguely. I think I met him a couple of times.

MR. SEARS: Lee was the one who blew out all the windows around Concord.

MR. STUBBS: I remember hearing something about that, what happened?

MR. SEARS: He went and got the Army to blow a trench in that water control structure.

They used detonator cord on top of the ice. It never even cracked the ice!

MR. STUBBS: Oh yeah?

MR. SEARS: It cost Great Meadows and the government \$50,000.00 to replace that stuff.

That came out of our budget.

MR. STUBBS: I remember coming up to Great Meadows and burning both pools. I don't know who I brought with me.

MR. SEARS: I was there.

MR. STUBBS: Were you? I remember that I went up to the Fire Department and told them

that we were going to burn. We set fire, and it sounded like a freight train coming down. You wouldn't believe the flames! But it didn't get out. It just went to the river.

MR. SEARS: It was Cattails.

MR. STUBBS: Can you imagine the trouble we would get in today if we did something like

that?

MR. SEARS: Do you remember the time that we put a telephone pole behind the Jeep and dragged it over the ice and dragged the Cattail down to break it off?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah!

MR. SEARS: We also used to put skates on and skate around and tend to the Wood duck

boxes. Somebody would take the shavings; somebody would take a couple of tarps, and hammers. Do you remember that Tom?

MR. STUBBS: Oh yeah!

MR. SEARS: We had some good times then, Tom, but we worked! We worked like hell!

MR. STUBBS: Yeah. We did a lot of work. Al Zelly was at the Refuge. He went to the

north pool by himself and was taking care of the boxes. He had skates on, and he fell through, and it was over his head. He barely got out. He was hollering for help and two people that were over on the boardwalk heard him and they came over. He was just about done for.

MR. GOETTEL: Boy! I never heard that!

MR. STUBBS: You know, you shouldn't go by yourself when you go out over water that it that deep. From the way he told it, he was just about ready to give up. He couldn't get out. MR. SEARS: Tommy, when we came up from Parker River, how did we get into the

impoundments. Think!

MR. STUBBS: We didn't do down the railroad tracks, we went across the railroad tracks.

MR. SEARS: And where did we come in?

MR. STUBBS: Right at the dike, or right at the spillway where you took the gravel out of.

MR. SEARS: We came down off of [Route] 62, right straight down through, across the

railroad tracks.

MR. STUBBS: That's right where the comfort station is.

MR. SEARS: No, not the comfort station. It's where the maintenance building is now.

MR. STUBBS: I don't know where the maintenance building is now.

MR SEARS: We didn't come down Munson Road and come in like you do now. You know,

they cannot find the right of way? I told them, and told them, and I showed them and they still can't find it! I talked to a guy who lives over on Butternut circle, I said, "We used to have a right of way here". He said, "Oh yeah, it's in my deed that the Fish and Wildlife could come down through there". And they can't find it in their things. They've been down there. They think I'm crazy!

MR. GOETTEL: What's the guys name? Do you remember?

MR. SEARS: I know where he lives. And I told Cal Melburg about it. He buys land or something. I hold him about it and I said, "You'll want to go and see this fellow and talk to him". They want that right of way. But I don't think he ever did.

MR. GOETTEL: Is that the last house on Butternut there?

MR. SEARS: You know how you come down the railroad bed, and you turn the corner to come down into the shop? Just as you turn the corner, right straight up through to "62". And they still can't find it. What they wanted to do is turn that shop that I had down there into a visitor's center. They want to have a road come

down through there and make a parking lot so there would be no parking on Munson Road. The people are squawking on Munson Road because they park up the sides of the road and the fire trucks can't get down there, or they can't get out of their driveways. They want to know why we don't come down in there. And they are told that we don't have it, but we do! I have used it, and I know Donny Grover would say the same thing! There used to be a bridge on "62" that you came over. The bridge is gone. Please say I'm crazy!

MR. STUBBS: I think I remember that. It went over a railroad track didn't it?

MR. SEARS: Yes. The railroad tracks ran down through and over to Concord Lumber where they bought oil and lumber. It's abandoned now. But there was a railroad bridge there. You had to go up over it. You ask Donny. Nobody knows anything about it now. They wanted that right of way. They tell me, "You must be mistaken". I'm not mistaken but I have no way to prove it unless I can talk to this guy. It's in his deed; the Fish and Wildlife has a right of way to come down through there. And I knew damn well anyway that it did.

MR. STUBBS: You would think that the Fish and Wildlife Service would just the guy's name, and look at his deed.

MR. SEARS: Well, I'll tell you; there's a lot of right of ways that we have lost because they don't exercise their right to use it.

MR. STUBBS: How many years does it take?

MR. SEARS: Seven years, or you lose it.

MR. STUBBS: So they've lost it then.

MR. SEARS: Yeah!

MR. STUBBS: Maybe that's why they are not checking it.

MR. SEARS: Well, if it's in the deed, I have no idea what they could do. I don't know how the law works. But as they tell me, "You have to use it at least once".

MR. STUBBS: Every year.

MR. SEARS: To come down through there in order to claim it. I don't know maybe the law has changed. I'm not a lawyer, so I don't know. But it's something they should do. And we've lost right of ways. I had a chain across one place, and McOwen, who lives across the way here took the chain down and put a gate up there himself and he's got a lock on it. I said to Moses, "You just lost that"! "Oh no we ain't lost that, I'll take care of him!" It's still locked. But hey, you've got to do something. [To Mr. Goettel] So what else are you thinking?

MR. STUBBS: What did they have for equipment when you came over here Harry?

MR. SEARS: Nothing! A wheelbarrow, and a hammer! And when he blew the frigging windows out, he says, "You take the wheelbarrow back, you can keep the hammer"! [All laughing] I said, "What the hell am I going to do with a hammer"? He told me, "You go

over and tear down some buildings over at the air base. We can get the nails and we can get the plywood to make Wood duck boxes". That's what started that. They had nothing.

MR. STUBBS: Did you say that this was in 1966 or 1967, some time in there?

MR. SEARS: Moses never did a thing. Do you remember the log cabin?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: Well, Moses had piled steel posts on it. They used it as a dump. Lee says, "If

you clean that out Harry, you can have it for a shop". I thought, "Jesus Christ, it will take a goddamned year to clean that stuff out"! But that's what we had. That's how we started. We had nothing!

MR. GOETTEL: That log cabin; that was owned by the previous owner wasn't it?

MR. SEARS: That was Sam Hoar. They used it for a gunning shack. There was no front on it. Red Walker put the front in, and that overhead door.

MR. STUBBS: He did.

MR. GOETTEL: Who was that? I never heard of Red Walker.

MR. SEARS: [to Mr. Stupps] You remember Red?

MR. STUBBS: Red was the maintenance man at Parker River.

MR. SEARS: He was a little fellow.

MR. STUBBS: He must have had close to thirty years in, when he retired. No, I'm not sure.

It was in the 1940s. He worked there for a while as a subcontractor, and then he got on permanent. I think he was the second permanent maintenance man, after me on the refuge.

MR. SEARS: Woody was first.

MR. STUBBS: No, I think Red was before him.

MR. SEARS: Well, Woody came in there somewhere, and then he quit and Fran came in. Remember Fran, his brother?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: Then Fran left and I guess Woody came back right before that didn't he?

MR. STUBBS: No, right after that. That was his brother, so he gave up his job. Fran went

up to the air base.

MR. SEARS: Yeah, he went quite a ways.

MR. GOETTEL: So you were in the old log cabin there. That must have been your shop for twenty years, wasn't it?

MR. SEARS: Yeah. That was a good shop. It was small, but it was good.

MR. GOETTEL: You had your old barrel stove in there.

MR. SEARS: Yep. There was electricity and heat in there.

MR. GOETTEL: There was room for one vehicle?

MR. SEARS: Yeah, but you couldn't close the door. You'd have to take it out at night. That was a good little shop. But it's come down on this now.

MR. STUBBS: We're in heaven now.

MR. SEARS: Now they are going to put up another big building down to O'Rourke's.

MR. GOETTEL: Really?

MR. SEARS: They are going to build it so that they can put some of these truck and trailers

in there. He claims he's got the money. They are supposed to start in the spring.

MR. GOETTEL: Boy, that's great.

MR. SEARS: We've got three big bays down there.

MR. GOETTEL: You mean down in the old barn?

MR. SEARS: They are cleaned out, and they got the wheat harvested and the stuff in there.

We've got the 550 dozer, the 555 backhoe, and the Tarracks loader in there, and we're going to put the grader in there.

MR. STUBBS: You got a grader too?

MR. SEARS: A 670, same as what Parker River has.

MR. STUBBS: You're kidding! Where did you get that?

MR. SEARS: The Navy. The Tarracks loader came from the Army. That's a big beast. It's all iron, and it's got a side dump. You've seen it.

MR. STUBBS: No, I've never seen it.

MR. SEARS: But you know what they are?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: The side dump is a huge bucket. We've got three farm tractors.

MR. STUBBS: You didn't have any when you first came here did you?

MR. SEARS: We got the International tractor out there, and a fifty-ton lowboy too.

MR. STUBBS: Fifty tons? Boy, who drives that?

MR. SEARS: I do!

MR. STUBBS: Really?

MR. SEARS: Yeah! That's what they haul the excavator on. Then we've got that "tag

along" trailer that Gavutis bought. You guys had it and I swamped the big one for the small trailer that Parker River has now.

MR. STUBBS: That was done after I retired then.

MR. SEARS: Yep. We got the Mack after you retired.

MR. STUBBS: You also got the trailer.

MR. SEARS: Yeah. They just didn't get their license.

MR. STUBBS: So they don't have anyone that can drive it?

MR. SEARS: Nope. I've hauled their stuff for them.

MR. STUBBS: You would think that that would be part of their job description.

MR. SEARS: Well, I thought it would have been here but they bypass it. They are not thinking. You can't get too many guys with a CDL [license].

MR. STUBBS: You'd think that if they have the equipment, they would have to have a

person to operate it.

MR. SEARS: Well, they're not thinking maintenance. They are bypassing maintenance people! That's what they are doing. The money is at the Park, that's where it is. It's not right.

MR. GOETTEL: I know what we were talking about when the phone rang there, Harry: You

were talking about banding Eiders down at Monomy.

MR. SEARS: [To Mr. Stupps] Do you remember the time that Donny and I went down there to band Eiders?

MR. STUBBS: No.

MR. SEARS: Bill French was there, it was in December. Bill sent Donny and I down there for a week. That's when they had the building at the south end of the island. It's burnt now. Donny and I went down there to band Eiders. "We were going to do a hell of a job, we'll get a lot of them." We tried everything. We used a cannon net. We baited, and baited. And we'd get up when the tide was coming in at one or two o'clock in the morning. They wouldn't

come in. We couldn't get them in. I said, "Donny, we've been here three days now and we've have caught a bird"!

MR. STUBBS: What did you bait with?

MR. SEARS: Corn.

MR. STUBBS: I didn't know that corn was on their diet.

MR. SEARS: *It isn't!* [All laughing] They live on mussels, and they don't have to come in to eat! But Bill

French said, "Take some corn". We did, and baited for three days. Donny said he didn't know what to do. I told him to shoot the next bastard that comes in and we'd prop it up. We'll bring them in that way. And when they come in, we'll fire the net.

MR. STUBBS: So you used the dead ones as bait?

MR. SEARS: Yeah, we shot one and propped him up on a stick so the other would see him. It didn't work! We couldn't get one bird to come in. We were there a whole week. I told Donny, "Hey, this is it, we've got to go home". On Friday night we started through water and the tide came in. There was water up to the hubs. You know how far it is from that building up to the north end where we kept the boat. We drove that truck through water. We were going along, and Donny said, "Keep going, keep going"! We got up there, and we got the boat in the water to come across. We came across at Horn's Marina. Do you remember Horn's Marina?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: We came across to there. We landed there and said, "Let's get the hell home"! And coming home, it snowed like hell all the way from Chatham until you get to "128" down here. We got back to Parker River at 8:30 at night. Bill French had the gall to ask us if we wanted to go down there the next week! "What the hell for"? Ask Donny some time. We had quite a time!

MR. STUBBS: It's a wonder we didn't loose someone at Monomy. I went down there one time. Do you remember Louis Hines? Louis and I and Dan Rhines were going to go down there to burn a building. We got the Coast Guard to take us out, and it was rough. There was a rubber boat, with the steering in the center and a motorcycle seat in the back. Dan would never tell us that he couldn't swim, but I am sure to this day that he can't swim. I could see which way the wind was blowing. I thought that as soon as we got out of the little harbor we were going to get drenched. So I located myself behind the other guy and poor old Dan was at the front, and he got drenched. Louis would have to jump out, and push us off of the Coast Guard boat. They obviously didn't know how to run our little boat. Dan was mad, and when we were coming to the beach. I could tell from the way that we were going in, and I said, "You haven't seen nothing yet. Just wait a few minutes"! We were going bow first. And the breakers were breaking! As soon as we hit, I jumped and ran up the beach. And with the next wave they lost the radios, and everything. We had no communication with the Coast Guard Station. Our radios were wet and so was the engine, they couldn't get that started. So we burned the building. At three o'clock the Coast Guard went over. They had tried to contact us, and when they couldn't get us, they sent a helicopter. They flew over us, and we waved at them. They landed and they had a radio and called the Coast Guard Station. They told the Coast Guard guys that were with us that they had to stay there. They were going to send another boat to tow them back. We got on the Coast Guard Helicopter and they brought us back. But I am telling you, that's a bad place up there.

MR. SEARS: You'd better believe it! Do you remember when we had a truck up on the north end? We also had an old C-3 down there. Do you remember that?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: I barged them off, from the north end of the island to Horn's Marina. While I was coming across, the water was coming right up over the top of that barge. It's a wonder we didn't loose them.

MR. STUBBS: Is that right?

MR. SEARS: We did some of the goddamndest things in those days! Some of them were crazy, but we done them!

MR. STUBBS: It's just lucky that somebody didn't get hurt.

MR. SEARS: That's right.

MR. GOETTEL: Did you put in those water control structures down there? Right by Big

Pond there's a couple of old water control structures between Powder Hole and the lighthouse.

MR. SEARS: Yeah.

MR. GOETTEL: You did? Was that before it was wilderness?

MR. SEARS: That Monomoy deal was something else.

MR. STUBBS: Is Monomoy staffed now?

MR. GOETTEL: Yes.

MR. SEARS: They've got new staff there now. There's a girl that's a biologist, Sharon something.

MR. GOETTEL: Sharon Fish.

MR. SEARS: Then there's Debbie. She came from out west, Colorado somewhere. She is the Manager. They have had law enforcement there part-time, in the summer time, and two or three interns. They are gone now. It was staffed pretty good. There was six or seven people there. There are only two people there right now. But we're going down on the thirtieth.

That's an order. Everybody's going down. They want to clean up the building. We spent a lot of money down there. You know, we've got the weather station now.

MR. STUBBS: Oh, you do?

MR. SEARS: That's ours. That's the Fish and Wildlife Services. They went out. They sent

up two balloons a day, one in the morning and one at night. But they don't use the building. We did it all over, and that's the headquarters now. In the old building, upstairs, we put in eight rooms for dorms. That's for anybody that goes down there; they can stay there and not have to go to a hotel.

MR. STUBBS: We used to stay there anyway.

MR. SEARS: But you didn't get the comfort that they get now boy!

MR. STUBBS: My wife was down there with us, and Woody and his wife; we went down there

to close up the building for the winter, and drain the system.

MR. SEARS: No more of that now.

MR. STUBBS: They keep the building open.

MR. SEARS: The water comes from the weather station. It is piped across to the other building. There's no well down over the hill. Do you remember the well down over the hill?

MR. STUBBS: I know they had a deep well there.

MR. SEARS: That's done away with now. Do you remember that fire system that they had

there? It was a thirty thousand gallon tank that was cemented in on the front lawn.

MR. STUBBS: No.

MR. SEARS: You don't remember that? There was also the fire pump was over there.

MR. STUBBS: I remember the pump.

MR. SEARS: That's all gone. I filled that water system full of sand. That's capped. I sealed

it right up.

MR. STUBBS: So was it ground level?

MR. SEARS: No, it was in-ground. That was the only fire protection they had for the whole

top of the hill there until they could get trucks off of the mainland. Everything is changed. You wouldn't know it down there now. They've done all of the parking lot. It's all "hottopped". We did a lot of work down there.

MR. GOETTEL: Harry went down to Washington to meet the President. Did you here about that?

MR. STUBBS: I did hear about that. He is quite a celebrity! What kind of award did you get?

MR. SEARS: What was it Tom Goettel?

MR. GOETTEL: It was the Unsung Hero Award. I think you were the first Unsung Hero.

MR. SEARS: It is the first. And they haven't had one since. [All laughing]

MR. STUBBS: That doesn't say much for you does it?

MR. SEARS: It was a good experience. But I don't know where the hell it ever came from.

MR. STUBBS: It was a good honor!

MR. SEARS: Yes, it was.

MR. GOETTEL: It's a remarkable honor it really is.

MR. SEARS: Yes, and the Regional Director, she's a woman. I met, shook hands and took pictures with her. I met Dan Ashe, the Assistant Director and shook hands with him. He is Bill Ashe's son. He's got an office over here.

MR. STUBBS: If that's his son, he was what assistant . . . ?

MR. SEARS: Assistant Regional Director.

MR. GOETTEL: No, Bill was the Deputy Regional Director. But Dan is what they call now the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. MR. SEARS: Jaime Clark is the Director. And she is a woman. She is a nice person isn't she

Tom?

MR. GOETTEL: Oh yeah. She's great.

MR. SEARS: She's a real nice person. I met her.

MR. GOETTEL: You met the Secretary Bruce Babbitt didn't you?

MR. SEARS: Yep.

MR. STUBBS: Did you? [Impressed]

MR. SEARS: Yep. And that goddamned Bud! I went into the building. They took me in to

introduce me to people. I didn't know he knew them. Jesus Christ, there was young girls

hugging and kissing him! “Bud, what the hell are you doing?” “Oh, I know all of these

people!” Every girl there, he knew! What a politician!

MR. STUBBS: You said you met the President too?

MR. SEARS: Yes, I did. I shook hands with Clinton, and Bruce Babbitt. I took pictures with both of them.

MR. GOETTEL: The President actually gave you the award didn’t he?

MR. SEARS: Yeah.

MR. STUBBS: Do you have those pictures?

MR. SEARS: I’ve got them at home, yeah.

MR. STUBBS: We should have them all over here. [Referring to walls in shop]

MR. SEARS: They could have had them in the office if they wanted them. They didn’t

mention it, so what the hell am I going to do with them?

MR. GOETTEL: I will copy them for you, and we can put them up here.

MR. SEARS: Why don’t we?

MR. GOETTEL: Sure, bring them in the next time.

MR. SEARS: I’ll bring the plaques and all!

MR. STUBBS: Make a copy for me too.

MR. SEARS: I was sitting in the entry way there. I’ve got a tape of the whole thing, and

what when on. I was sitting there in a chair with the rest of the guys; there was a lot of them

there getting awards. There were people from the Park Services, guys like that. A woman came in and she says, “Are you Harry Sears”? I said, “Yeah, why?” She said, “Here’s a plaque from Mr. Kennedy.” [Senator Edward Kennedy] Did you see it?

MR. GOETTEL: I did. I saw that one. You brought it in to the Regional office.

MR. SEARS: I didn’t know what to think of that. Really! I’ve got the tape. Have you got a VCR?

MR. STUBBS: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: You can put it in the VCR and see the whole thing.

MR. STUBBS: You should have those copied.

MR. SEARS: Who's going to copy them?

MR. GOETTEL: I'll copy them for you.

MR. SEARS: I thought they would copy them and have one in the Regional office and have

one over here if they wanted to show somebody. It's quite an honor for the Refuge.

MR. GOETTEL: It is!

MR. SEARS: They should have something. I'll bring them in.

MR. GOETTEL: What did the President say to you?

MR. SEARS: He just said, "Congratulations, it's a great honor"! I said, "Do you think you'll

ever amount to anything?" [All laughing] He spoke to everybody, and then he came down off of the stage. He went down the row, shaking hands with all of the guys and congratulating them. A lot of them said something worse than I did. One guy from the Park Service asked him how Monica was doing. [Monica Lewinski]

MR. STUBBS: That must have gone over great. That showed a lot of class!

MR. SEARS: Let me tell you something; he was just as calm, he smiled and shook hands and patted you on the back. He is a politician right from the word "Go"! Nothing bothered him.

MR. GOETTEL: So what did he say to you when you asked him that?

MR. SEARS: He said, "You come back in four years, and I'll tell you"!

MR. GOETTEL: Did he really?

MR. SEARS: The guys dared me to say it.

MR. STUBBS: Oh yeah?

MR. SEARS: But you had to be careful. The guys were lined up here [demonstrating] and the

President was coming down through here. But in the back of the President, there was FBI all over. You make a wrong move, and they would land on you quick! When we went in the hall, FBI checked the hall out before

anybody went in there. They had two dogs that walked around through the crowd. They were very, very cautious about who went in there. But me, like the fool that I am, didn't know what the hell was going on. I didn't know what to

expect. But I'll tell you, a lot of people work down at that Washington office. And that goddamned Bud, he knew *everybody*.

MR. STUBBS: Was he stationed down there?

MR. SEARS: I guess he worked in Washington. Didn't he?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah, he did.

MR. SEARS: He knew everybody. He is quite a politician. I'll tell you, you can't beat him. You can't beat that guy.

MR. STUBBS: Hal O'Connor was pretty good too.

MR. SEARS: Oh, I think Bud could put him to shame.

MR. STUBBS: Is that right?

MR. SEARS: Oh, Bud is quite a politician. He is a good guy. But he just knows people that's

all.

MR. STUBBS: [To Mr. Goettel] did you ever meet Hal O'Connor?

MR. GOETTEL: I've met him, but I didn't know him.

MR. STUBBS: He had a phenomenal memory. I had friends that knew him who were

members of a gun club. They told me that not only did he remember them, but also he knew their wives names, and what they did. And he also knew their children's names. My friend told me that he could hardly remember Mr. O'Connor's name.

MR. SEARS: I met him at a meeting here one time. It must have been ten or fifteen years after. He knew me. He came right up and shook hands, and asking me how things were going, and "How are you doing"?

MR. STUBBS: He went down to Washington, for a temporary assignment. When he came back I can remember him saying, "Never hold your drink with your right hand, because you never want to shake hands with a cold, clammy hand". I said to myself, "Gee, this guy don't miss nothing"!

MR. SEARS: He was right wasn't he?

MR. STUBBS: Oh, he was really a good politician. He was a good public speaker.

MR. SEARS: I remember he would stand up behind the podium. "Red" made that for him.

And he made Red change it three or four times.

MR. STUBBS: He had the Fish and Wildlife Seal on it and everything. He knew how to do things. MR.

SEARS: He was at Monomoy. Then he went to Manager's training, and then he came

to Parker River. Do you remember that? MR.

STUBBS: I had forgot that.

MR. SEARS: I knew where he came from.

MR. STUBBS: He was a good guy. No question about that. I think retired from Parker River.

MR. SEARS: Was he in Washington when he retired?

MR. GOETTEL: I think he was at Patuxent. He was the Director at Patuxent for quite a

while, I think.

MR. SEARS: Do you ever get down to NCTC in Virginia, where they have this training?

That's a new building down there isn't it Tom?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah, it's beautiful.

MR. SEARS: Yes, it's beautiful. That's for everybody isn't it?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah.

MR. SEARS: FBI and everybody.

MR. GOETTEL: It's more for conservation people.

MR. SEARS: But it's a beautiful place.

MR. GOETTEL: Well, we probably ought to get going here Tommy. We're going to have

to get down to Marshfield, and it's probably an hour or so.

MR. SEARS: Yeah, you've probably got an hour to go.

MR. GOETTEL: Well Harry, thanks, I appreciate it.

MR. SEARS: That's all right.

MR. GOETTEL: Maybe we can do it again.

MR.

—